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LIBYA TRANSITION INITIATIVE 2

ANNUAL REPORT
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Chemonics International Inc.

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Since September 2011, USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), through implementing partner Chemonics International, has administered a small-grants program in Libya. Since September 2011, OTI has approved 238 grants for the Libya Transition Initiative (LTI) as follows:

Region ¹	No. of Activities ²
West	132
East	74
South	32
Total	238

For the first year of LTI 2³, the program's strategy focused on peace building efforts to address the root causes of the myriad of conflicts in Libya that have undermined the country's transition. Addressing internal conflicts will strengthen the foundations on which to re-establish Libya's political transition and ultimately contribute to sustainable peace. Within this strategic framework, LTI 2 prioritized two objectives:

- Supporting youth to engage more regularly and constructively in civic life; and
- Supporting voices for non-violence and dialogue to become more influential in determining Libya's transition.

LTI 2 facilitated a number of high-impact opportunities for youth to be more involved in civic life. LTI 2 also committed support for local pro-dialogue leaders, national and regional dialogue efforts as well as political processes that provided alternatives to violence. The project partnered with youth leaders, community organizations, and media actors who have the potential to produce a catalytic effect and reach others in their spheres of influence.

In June 2015, LTI 2's strategic focus pivoted towards regionally-based analysis and clustered programming. In response to the conflict and polarization of the past year, LTI 2 has helped partners adjust to a rapidly changing environment. The project is also reinforcing the resiliency and security of civil society groups and activists so that they continue to operate effectively in an environment that has become increasingly hostile to civic activism. While opportunities to support the Libyan transition at the national level are currently limited, the project has worked with CSOs to support local level progress and counter social and political polarization. Capitalizing on the growing relevance of Municipal Councils, the project has coordinated with

¹ West and East include activities implemented on a national scale.

² Grant total does not include cancelled activities.

³ LTI 2 started in September 2014, but LTI 1 continued through February 2015, and thus the bulk of LTI 2 activities and this report focuses on the core 7 months (March-September 2015) of LTI 2.

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USAID and the International Republican Institute (IRI) to establish a strategic partnership with eight municipal councils across Libya. This partnership was developed to support projects that will build public confidence and participation in local governance. Finally, LTI 2 is launching new efforts to counter socio-political fragmentation on the basis of regional and tribal identities. This programming starts with efforts to support cross-communal social interaction on the basis of shared interests and develops into opportunities for more sustained, longer-term forms of interaction. This process of associational engagement promotes communication between members of different communities and builds the foundation for sustainable peace.

To date, and in support of the evolving strategic goals of LTI and LTI 2, the project has distributed 508,279 outreach products, held 137 conferences/workshops, supported 187 outreach campaigns, produced 286 media stories and organized trainings for 403 civil society organizations (CSOs) and 35 government officials. A total of 4,370 persons – including 1,064 women – have been reached through OTI-supported trainings.

This Annual Report covers activities and events between August 11, 2014 and September 30, 2015. Please note that while LTI 2 started in September 2014, LTI 1 continued through February 2015, and thus the bulk of LTI 2 activities and this report focus on LTI 2 activities completed between March and September 2015.

I. COUNTRY SITUATION

Background on the Libyan Context

The past year has witnessed the derailment of Libya's political transition amid increasing violence. Corruption and political stalemate soured many Libyans to national level politics, depressing levels of voter turnout in 2014 and increasing pessimism in the prospects for Libya's transition. The launch of Operation Dignity (OD) in Benghazi in May 2014, pitted the remnants of the previous regime's armed forces against revolutionary and Islamist groups, further polarizing the national political landscape. Disputes over the June 2014 vote for Libya's House of Representatives (HoR) led to formation of two competing governments based in Tripoli and Tobruk. Rival militias fought for control of the capital in July 2014, while fighting spread through much of northwest Libya in late 2014 and early 2015. Due to the ongoing fighting, the US Embassy, most other diplomatic missions, and the majority of international organizations and companies, withdrew from Tripoli mid-2014, while LTI was one of the last international organizations in-country until early February 2015.

In August 2014, Tripoli came under the control of Libya Dawn, a coalition of militias from many western cities that had banded together to oppose the new HoR. The militias, dominated by Islamist and revolutionary constituencies from western Libya's coastal cities, supported the reconvening of the General National Congress (GNC) in September 2014, Libya's first democratically elected parliament whose mandate had expired but had refused to officially handover authority to the HoR. However, a controversial Supreme Court decision in November cast doubt on aspects of the elections that brought the HoR into existence, throwing the political process into institutional disarray. In response, a reconstituted GNC, attended by a fraction of its original membership, formed a "Government of National Salvation" including a prime minister and cabinet, as a parallel government to the HoR-supported and internationally recognized government in Tobruk and Bayda. Conflict continued for the rest of 2014 in western Libya between supporters of the GNC/Libya Dawn and supporters of the HoR. In the east, the HoR developed a troubled relationship with OD forces. In an attempt to bring these forces under civilian control, General Khalifa Heftar was given the position of Chief of Staff of the armed forces. In the south, existing tribal tensions were made worse by the efforts of OD/HoR and Libya Dawn/GNC affiliated actors to secure support from southern communities and leaders.

Libya's descent into a myriad of local and regional conflicts amid the ongoing political crisis provided new space for extremist groups to expand throughout 2014. Porous borders have allowed foreign fighters, trained in Iraq and Syria, into Libya, bringing with them new skills and more extreme ideologies. Supporters of the Islamic State (IS), established in Syria and Iraq in 2014, encouraged Libyan jihadis to pledge allegiance to IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Across Libya, divisions within jihadi groups such as Ansar al-Shariah (AS) formed, with some choosing to join IS while others maintained links and sympathies with al-Qaeda. The Islamic State and other indigenous extremist groups maintain a significant presence in Sirte, Benghazi and Derna and will present significant challenges to solving the region's conflicts.

In response to Libya's escalating political and security crisis, the United Nation's Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) initiated a political dialogue to bring together Libya's warring factions. While early meetings in September and October 2014 showed some promise, escalating violence and the entrenchment of the two rival governments made negotiations more difficult. The UN-sponsored dialogue continued at various locations abroad, eventually settling in the Moroccan city of Skhirat. The dialogue process has been long and protracted because both sides have internal divisions and unclear lines of authority between political and military wings. While the outlines of a political agreement emerged by the end of the summer of 2015, it is unclear whether both sides will be able to agree to it, or if the armed factions on either side will respect any agreement they reach.

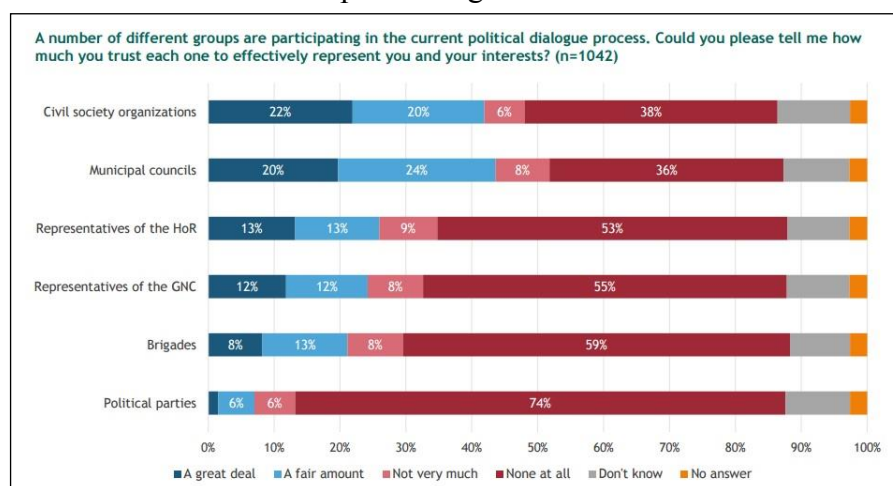
Throughout 2015, the conflicts in the west and the east have taken different trajectories. Encouraged by progress on the political track Misrata's military council directed its militias to pull back from fighting south and west of Tripoli. Misrata's withdrawal led the smaller partners in the Libya Dawn alliance to pursue peace talks with their adversaries, Zintan and Wershefana. A series of prisoner exchanges and ceasefires between May and June effectively ended hostilities in the west between Libya Dawn and OD aligned forces and provided some relief for the region's residents, many of whom had been displaced by fighting over the previous year. In the east, however, fighting has continued unabated in Benghazi between OD and the coalition of revolutionary and Islamist militias that fall under the Benghazi Revolutionary Shura Council (BRSC). Some areas of the city have been severely damaged, tens of thousands have been internally displaced and hundreds have been killed. While reconciliation has advanced in the west, the conflict has only become more entrenched in the east.

Southern Libya has remained at once separated from the political and military struggles of coastal Libya, while also becoming the stage of proxy struggles as the country's two factions seek to extend their influence into the country's interior. Porous borders, the collapse of state authority and the rise of illicit smuggling in drugs, weapons, and migrants ignited a conflict

between the Tebu and Tuareg ethnic minorities in Ubari over oil facilities and resources and control of lucrative cross-border trade routes. Lingering conflicts also exist among the South's Arab tribes between those who supported the Qaddafi regime and those who most profited from the 2011 revolution. As the very light presence of the state in the south has further evaporated, the region has been left to largely fend for itself. Crime has become a significant factor in many locations, and fuel and other shortages are a constant concern.

Current Situation and Prospects

As state institutions collapsed, many local communities have looked inward for solutions. Social and political strife and state collapse have eroded trust and led Libyans to rally around local identities based on affiliations of tribe, ethnicity, or city. In many regions this process has been accompanied by increased conflict between groups that has escalated to violence. Violent conflict, in turn, reinforces political and social polarization while further eroding trust in other communities. Halting the spiral of polarization, fragmentation and conflict will be essential to reviving Libya's transition. Conflict has also constrained the space for civil society to operate effectively in Libya. Additionally, the spread of extremist groups will present serious challenges to Libya's stabilization if and when a political agreement can be reached.



With the collapse of national institutions, Municipal Councils, elected in over 100 municipalities across Libya in 2014, have attempted to step into the governance void. Municipal Councils have the benefit of clear legitimacy based on transparent, locally-managed elections. Expectations of their performance have been high, but the councils have been unable to access national funding and have limited capabilities to provide services. Ambiguities in the Local Administration Law, drafted in 2012, and the relative inexperience of many new Municipal Council members, has further inhibited their work. Nonetheless, recent LTI 2 research in Libya showed that Municipal

Councils remain the most respected formal governance institutions in Libya.⁴ Additionally, a recent national survey showed that Libyans across the country trust their Municipal Councils to represent their interests within the current political dialogue process above all other institutions (see chart above).⁵ With the prospect of continued political infighting and dysfunction at the national level appearing likely, communities will continue to look to Municipal Councils to help fill the governance void.

While the UN has been effective in coaxing Libya's factions to the bargaining table and mostly keeping them there, it remains to be seen if a final agreement can be reached and, if reached, implemented to build an effective and stable government. Libyans remain guardedly optimistic about the success of the dialogue.

A GNA of the type proposed by UNSMIL will bring together two competing factions that have shown little ability to work together and are, themselves, internally divided. In addition to the internal political divisions, the government will likely face external challenges from actors who were not party to the negotiations or do not support their outcome. This group could include prominent politicians, significant revolutionary militias and other armed groups, and extremist groups. While facing these multiple challenges, the government will also have to respond to high expectations from Libyans to provide services and improve living conditions. The initial challenges, then, will be significant for the GNA and it will be important for the international community to step in immediately with assistance in multiple sectors.

⁴ LTI, *Tripoli divided over HoR/GNC, though avenues for dialogue remain*, 26 November 2014. Altai Consulting, *GSA Public Perceptions Snap Survey 3 (Misrata)*, April, 2015. Altai Consulting *GSA Public Perceptions Snap Survey 1*, 13 December 2014.

⁵ Altai Consulting, *National public perceptions survey 3: Overview of results*, July, 2015.

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Timeline of Libyan Political and Security Developments

August, 2014 to September, 2015

- ● Political Development
- ● Security Development
- ● Other

August

- ● House of Representatives calls on UN to intervene in Libya conflict.
- ● Libya Dawn captures Tripoli Airport.
- ● Conflict erupts in Ubari between Tebu and Tuareg

September

- ● The GNC reconvenes in Tripoli.
- ● Tawfik Bensaud, 18 yr old activist and LTI grantee, killed by extremists in Benghazi
- ● GNC establishes Governemnt of National Salvation in Tripoli.
- ● UN-mediated political dialogue begins in Ghadames.

October

- ● Derna extremists pledge allegiance to the Islamic State.
- ● UN dialogue meets in Tripoli, HoR members visit capital for first time.
- ● Zintan launches counteroffensive in Kikla.

November

- ● Tuareg sieze Ubari oil field from Tebu.
- ● Supreme Court ruling calls into question parliamentary procedure that led to HoR election.
- ● Bombings target Marj, Tobruk and Labraq in east; extremist groups suspected.
- ● Militias force closure of National Council for Civil Liberties and Human Rights in Tripoli.

December

- ● Operation Sunrise begins, Libya Dawn forces attack Gulf of Sirte oil terminals, forcing closure.
- ● Constitutional Drafting Assembly releases initials drafts of constitution.
- ● Car bomb targets Diplomatic Police Headquarters in Tripoli.

January, 2015

- ● LNA airstrike hits Greek tanker off Derna, killing two.
- ● UN-sponsored political dialogue meets in Geneva; Dawn and Dignity both announce brief ceasefires.
- ● Islamic State attacks Corinthia Hotel in Tripoli kills nine, including one American.
- ● Municipal Councils included in UN-sponsored dialogue for first time.

February

- ● IS attacks Mabruk oil field near Sirte.
- ● IS executes 20 Egyptians in Sirte, releases video.
- ● In response to IS executions, Egypt bombs IS locations in Derna.
- ● IS bombs Qubbah, killing 30.

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March

- — ● Hefar appointed head of Libyan army by HoR.
- — ● Misratan 166 Brigade deploys to Sirte to fight IS.
- — ● GNC forces PM Hassi to resign, replaces him with Khalifa al-Ghowel.

April

- — ● Both Libya Dawn and Dignity forces withdraw from fighting around Gulf of Sirte oil terminals.
- — ● IS targets Misrata with car bombs, attacks.
- — ● UN-sponsored dialogue resumes in Morocco
- — ● 900 migrants die when overloaded boat capsizes off the Libyan coast.

May

- — ● Misratan forces pull back from Tripoli fighting, ceasefires take shape between Dawn and Dignity-aligned towns.
- — ● UN dialogue meets in Tripoli, HoR members visit capital for first time.
- — ● Misratan militias issue call for peace and national reconciliation .
- — ● Fighting in Ubari worsens as Tebu target Tuareg forces in the city.

June

- — ● Misratan 166 Brigade withdraws from Sirte, leaving IS in control of the city.
- — ● Zintan signs multiple peace agreements with neighboring cities, Libya Dawn coalition fractures.
- — ● Hard core elements of Libya Dawn reconstitute as Samood Force, pledge to defend Tripoli.
- — ● Dialogue resumes in Morocco, two sides disagree over division of powers in unity government.

July

- — ● IS consolidates forces in Sirte, continues attacks in Misrata.
- — ● GNC delegates skip Morocco dialogue meeting, HoR and independents initial draft agreement.
- — ● Tebu/Tuareg strife spreads from Ubari to Sabha.
- — ● Tunisia begins digging ditch along Libyan border to stop movement of terrorists and weapons.

August

- — ● Sentencing of Qadhafi regime members leads to pro-Qadhafi demonstrations across the country.
- — ● IS violently suppresses uprising in Sirte.
- — ● GNC rejoins dialogue process at Geneva meeting.
- — ● Tripoli Mayor Harati is removed from office for poor performance.

September

- — ● UN-sponsored dialogue continues in Geneva, GNC requests changes to initialed draft agreement.
- — ● Tebu and Tuareg boycott CDA over minority rights in the constitution.
- — ● UN deadline passes with no agreement between GNC and HoR.

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II. PROGRAM OPERATIONS

LTI 2 operates three Libyan offices as well as an office in Tunis where the expatriate management staff work. While LTI 2's strength is in the national staff and wide network of Libyan grantees and partners, it is only through an innovative approach to project operations that the program has been able to continue to be effective.

LTI 2 began operations in challenging circumstances. The project had not yet developed systems for extended remote management. The startup conference in September 2014 highlighted the need for improvements to be made to operational systems, infrastructure and the centralized structure of staff roles and responsibilities. Making those improvements was the primary operational priority of the project in the following months – while expatriate presence in Libya was either limited or in flux.

In moving to a completely remote managed platform, LTI 2 has prioritized the nationalization of project implementation, streamlining operational processes and forward-leaning risk mitigation measures. Many of these priorities were informed by lessons learned from the LTI relocation of July 2014.

Other notable operational accomplishments during this reporting period include the remotely managed relocation of the East office and the startup of the Tunis office.

These operational achievements and integration of lessons learned have allowed LTI 2 to stand out as one of the few international projects that has maintained full operational capacity in Libya since July 2014.

III. REGIONAL PRIORITIES AND ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

At the June 2015 Rolling Assessment, LTI 2 program staff and leadership redirected the strategic focus of the project from its initial peace-building emphasis to building community cohesion and social trust. The regional sections below feature the work that has been done under the original strategic framework, as well as the realigned program direction, and highlight program impact throughout the reporting period.

A. WEST

In recent months, Western Libya witnessed a significant reduction in violence caused by the conflict between Operation Dignity and Libya Dawn aligned forces. Prominent militia leaders on both sides, supported by community elders, facilitated the conclusion of a series of peace deals between the warring parties. While results of the UN-led peace negotiations remained uncertain, people have turned to their community leaders for solutions. Locally-brokered cease-fires, along with increasing conflict fatigue, have created an opening for programming to help sustain these positive developments.

With the principal goal of increasing interaction and fostering social trust, LTI 2 continues to develop clusters of activities that address the issue of reduced social space, limited contact, and the eroded sense of social cohesion, all of which tend to contribute to a protracted inter-group conflict. Resting on the assumption that reversing these trends will provide positive impetus to peace and transition, the West office is prioritizing activities that provide spaces and opportunities for positive interaction and trust-building at the local level.

To complement this effort, and with the goal of seeing local institutions and actors (in particular, municipal councils and civil society groups) play a larger and more formal role in sustaining peace, LTI 2 is working on the activities to provide these groups with the capacity, initial resources, space and opportunities to increase their visibility within the community, and communicate effectively with one another and constituents. The two-tier approach, illustrated by selected activities below, is intended to strengthen relationships and trust among the communities in conflict. In addition, it also intended to reinforce ties between community leaders and their constituents, while encouraging them to work together on collective action.

1. *Helping to repair the frayed social fabric and foster unity by promoting greater interaction*

After three months of filming across Libya, an LTI 2 grantee completed a collection of testimonies featuring wounded fighters from both sides of Libya's conflict speaking about the cost of war. The grantee partnered with a group of local associations to capture the personal accounts of soldiers and



A professional photographer takes pictures for a LTI2-funded magazine

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civilians from several Libyan cities. All spoke of the high cost of fighting, and called for collective forgiveness and an end to the conflict. In the beginning, injured soldiers were hesitant to speak openly, knowing their testimonies would be paired with messages from their adversaries. But as the Project Manager, noted, “After some time, we found that most of them wanted to be a part of the peace initiative and were keen to volunteer their time and personal stories to help others understand that war is not a way to build our country.”

In October, an LTI grantee launched a magazine with support from LTI 2. Through the publication of a monthly magazine and website, the group aims to foster national pride and shared identity among Libyans by making their history more accessible and relevant to ordinary citizens – especially youth. The publications include articles and photographs featuring the country’s enthralling natural and cultural beauty, as well as its complex history. Public reaction has been overwhelmingly positive. Many other Libyan groups reposted the web publication, further raising the profile of the initiative. “This is a great step in starting to share the authentic Libyan history and remind us of the diversity of our lands,” noted one follower.

In September, another grantee completed filming a music video that features children from all corners of the country singing a song of peace written for the video by a well-known composer of traditional Libyan music. The six-minute video showcases Libya’s diversity and cultural heritage, inspires a sentiment of shared national identity while delivering an anti-war message. The video, which is currently with focus groups, will air on traditional radio and TV channels across Libya, in addition to being distributed via social media.

In June 2015, a respected Libyan youth organization and long-time LTI partner, organized a series of three football matches to emphasize Libya’s diversity and promote the idea of national unity. Nearly 1,000 people turned up for the three matches. The matches involved mixed teams of veteran players and contemporary football stars from across Libya. The audience, made up mostly of youth from Tripoli, was happy to see such an event. “This game brought life to our neighborhood,” said one young man, continuing: “All we ever hear about from the media are war stories. Football can bring us young people together and give us something to do, so we can stop being used as a fuel for the war.” A famous former Libyan national team player, was also in the audience and expressed his enthusiasm for the initiative: “This sends an important message to Libyan people: stop fighting. We’ve had enough killing and enough blood. Libya is one and there is no difference if you are from the east or west, from the north or south...we are all one.” LTI 2 sponsored the games as part of efforts to promote social cohesion and national unity, and to give voice to citizens who are increasingly desperate for an end to the current conflict. Bringing together the veteran and young football stars from different locations, symbolized the continuity, but also highlighted the strong connection between the two generations in their effort to rebuild the country. The public’s reaction to the series of matches was tremendous, with positive feedback pouring in from spectators, and reports of at least half dozen similar events being organized across the West region. The broad appeal of this summer campaign confirmed the notion that popular sports, credible public figures and increased opportunities for interaction for youth, which makes up over a half of population in Libya, could serve as an effective catalyst for greater national cohesion.

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In May 2015, LTI 2 supported the establishment of a Capacity Development Center with office equipment, furniture, and a workshop for regional activists, as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen the capacity of civil society actors to expand local peace initiatives and constructively engage in the political process. The assistance has enabled the Center to become fully operational and better able to serve the needs of CSOs in a strategic region that had traditionally been neglected by international donors. In the three months following the activity, the Center has become an active training hub in western Libya, organizing or hosting more than a dozen workshops, seminars, and civic campaigns aimed at strengthening social activism and empowering local youth from several Libyan cities. While LTI2 did not fund the subsequent activities, the Center, with a fully equipped conference space and a strong network of CSOs, emerged as a fitting partner for other organizations active in the region. Apart from traditional capacity building workshops for civic activists, with assistance from another USG program, the Center hosted a conference for municipal councils from three Libyan towns to improve linkages with CSOs and residents. The Center has been instrumental in supporting other LTI 2 activities, including large regional youth gatherings, such as TIP024 (see below) by contributing its strong network of civic activists to these events and encouraging greater interaction with their peers from several parts of the Western region. LTI 2 hopes that this Center will continue invigorating CSOs and engaging municipal councils in this strategic area with the goal of creating robust civil society networks and encouraging more inclusive and representative local governance.

In July, LTI 2 supported a *Youth Group* to organize an evening of social activities and networking for hundreds of young activists representing nearly 40 CSOs from the Western region. The gathering included a facilitated discussion about ongoing peace efforts in western Libya and ways to support them, but also late-night music and stand-up comedy. This event was unique in that it drew significant participation from the members of a Libyan tribe which historically has had limited interaction with activists and groups from other regions in the West. The gathering was effective in invigorating youth and youth groups from the key western towns on both sides of the conflict, where the animosity and violence have been particularly acute, and opening conversations on how to support the local level peace process. The event helped create an organic network of youth associations that has continued working together, mobilizing other young people, and speaking publicly to promote peace and tolerance.

B. EAST

In the spring of 2015, clearing operations in Benghazi inspired a contagious belief that stability was on the return in the East. Residents expected to see a resumption of basic services and the return of civil society activity. The project expected that this shift would be a catalyst that will further engage citizens and local government institutions.

LTI 2 assessed that one of the major challenges during this process would be supporting and providing conflict resolution mechanisms for internally displaced people (IDP) and the communities that host them. Many people fled Benghazi to the neighboring cities of Bayda and

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Shahat to escape the ongoing conflict in their neighborhoods. Although communities accepted IDPs as a consequence of the conflict, the swell in these cities' populations has resulted in strain on public and private resources – increasing the risk of conflict between host and IDP communities.

LTI 2 assesses that there is strategic value in providing CSOs with platforms and spaces for public, positive, social engagement to rebuild a sense of community and fill the vacuum of social service delivery. This is critical as, given the right opportunities, local actors and entities will invest in local solutions irrespective of the progress of national level dialogue processes. Similarly, a key cause of tension between IDPs and host communities is the lack of space for social interaction and formal conflict resolution. LTI's work to support grantees to develop such spaces in the East is complemented by working with non-polarizing local media outlets to help mitigate conflict and resolve issues between IDPs and host communities. The activities described below highlight the work LTI has done to support these two strategic regional priorities.

Unfortunately, the hope that the security situation in Benghazi would continue to improve has been unfulfilled. While some neighborhoods have seen a decrease in fighting for periods of time, the overall security situation and context of ongoing fighting has remained the same. That said, those periods of time provided openings for programming in strategically important areas and communities of Benghazi.

A Libyan youth-based humanitarian organization, with the assistance of LTI 2, launched a campaign in July 2015 to support of the thousands of displaced families affected by the ongoing fighting in Benghazi. During the 10-day campaign, volunteers distributed bedding supply packages to 294 displaced families taking shelter in one of an evacuation center in and around Benghazi. Based on the number of families that registered, this youth organization estimates nearly 1,600 displaced persons benefited from the response. LTI 2 supported this youth organization with material support in the form of 1,000 mattresses, pillows, and blankets. The project provided generators to help the organization maintain service provision despite daily electricity outages, as well as 240 safety uniforms for its staff and volunteers. This youth organization has also mobilized resources to contribute an additional 176 beds, pillows and blankets to the campaign. LTI's support aimed to assist the organization to proactively carry out its mission, respond effectively to the community needs, ultimately increasing its credibility and providing the public with opportunities to advocate for non-violence and peaceful solutions in Benghazi.

Through another grant, LTI 2 is supporting the creation of youth rugby teams ranging in age between six and 18 years old as well as two senior classes for players 19 and above. Approximately 190 players from throughout the city – both residents and IDPs – have signed up to participate with the club. A 4-day rugby tournament in October will feature the club's teams playing in front of public crowds to promote unity and solidarity among Benghazi citizens. In a city that still has areas under the constant barrage of ongoing fighting, the grantee still expects to

rally 500 residents and IDPs living in safe neighborhoods to come enjoy the festivities and cheer on the teams. In addition to receiving LTI support to initiate the rugby club, the club was proud to be a part of the movement that got the sport officially recognized by the Office of Sport at the Ministry of Education for first time in the history of Libya.

—Another grantee created a magazine incorporating the works of local artists from Benghazi to produce four issues of seven original manga story lines. The artists – divided into writers, drawing artists, and artist assistants – all hailed from a cohort of Manga fans in Benghazi, and joined the effort through the outreach effort of the grantee’s Facebook page. The magazine distributed 1,000 copies of each issue to shops and stores in four Libyan cities. The magazine has engaged youth throughout the East, both through the distribution of a thousand copies of each issue as well as through online forums and commentary. With over 3,700 “likes” on the organization’s Facebook page, news of the Benghazi-based distribution of the first magazine had fans and followers from Tripoli requesting distribution points in the West. The biggest complaint that the grantee received from stores used for distribution is that there are never enough copies of the magazine to go around. In a testament to the potential that the Manga magazine has tapped into, it has garnered interest throughout the country and abroad.

"Before finding this newspaper, I was not interested in reading any newspapers because they were divided over political issues. Now that I read the first edition, I find myself asking when the second edition will be available. It really changed my mind about journalism in Libya. Its articles are about real Libya we once knew and not about repeated and boring political issues or policy makers."

- Abdaleahead, civil engineer

Between July and September 2015, a total of 8,000 copies of four distinct issues of a locally-focused newspaper were delivered across eastern Libya. While many in eastern Libya seek an end to the conflict and yearn for a Libya with civil institutions, they are often confronted with polarizing ideological disputes promoted by aggressive, partisan media messaging that inflates the conflict and seeks to exploit the tensions around IDPs for political gain. By supporting this grantee, LTI helped a set of advocates to communicate more effectively, reshaping public discussion to focus on local development issues and help find community-level solutions to their most pressing issues.

The grantee has built upon the buzz and momentum from the paper’s launch by highlighting serious dialogue on grass-roots development topics rather than polarizing political issues in the paper’s articles. With a growing readership, distributors noted that the demand had overtaken the supply.

Although Shahat’s residents have accepted IDPs as a consequence of Libya’s ongoing conflict, tensions between Shahat residents and IDPs from Benghazi have been on the rise due to a drastic increase in the prices of rent and goods, and the strain on resources. The LTI 2 grantee partnered with the city’s municipal council and a local sports club to give children and families from displaced and host communities an opportunity to interact and build relationships with each other

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during a month of sports and games in July. The grantee used the friendly competitions to promote inter-group cooperation and foster a sense of solidarity between the groups. Approximately 250 people, mostly children and youth, took part in the activities, which included chess matches, a drawing competition, traditional Arabic calligraphy, and a trivia game.

C. SOUTH

The south is a tribally diverse area with long-standing tensions between communities. The Gadhafi regime exploited local divisions and manipulated the traditional tribal authority structures to assert control in the region. This history, in combination with the post-revolution disruption of the precarious balance of power between tribes, has eroded social trust and cooperation in the South. Tribal differences have recently been exacerbated by the national, Dawn-Dignity political conflict and have turned violent over the past two years. The presence of militant groups is maintained by active recruitment of youth – who then act as spoilers in dialogue and peace building efforts. Young people do not feel like they have a role in community decisions through the official channels and have expressed very low levels of confidence in local and national leaders in LTI research. Polarized media has increased these tensions by providing biased information.

LTI's research found that a key motivation for youth to engage in violence is that they believe it gives them influence in their communities and offers a method for solving problems.

LTI 2 has facilitated opportunities for youth to be more involved in civic life, dialogue efforts, and political processes to provide alternatives to exerting influence through armed violence. To support this objective, the project has partnered with youth leaders and organizations that have the potential to produce a catalytic effect and reach other youth in their spheres of influence.

In May, LTI 2 launched a partnership with a youth club. The project supported the Club's peace campaign by supplying equipment and logistical assistance. The campaign, which launched in June, aimed to foster support for civic activism and national unity among youth and their networks. An estimated 500 people attended the launch event, including youth, officials from the Libyan education sector and staff members from various universities.

Research conducted by LTI 2 indicated that this Youth Club is the most influential entity in Sabha. Findings also pointed to strong links between the Club and the broader community are involved in CSOs.

Through another activity, LTI 2 was able to engage a Youth Group, who have been long-respected and trusted in the South for their neutrality, inclusivity, and community service, to conduct a community-wide peace seminar and rally that encouraged dialogue, unity, and peaceful coexistence. The Group organized and held the event to coincide with the group's 60th anniversary, and the events were attended by an estimated 600 community members. CSOs, activists, tribal elders, and local government representatives all participated, including several LTI partners and grantees. One municipal council member said, "I am pleased to see such activity by youth and them taking their role to help maintain peace." During the evening a peace

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march filled the streets of downtown Sabha – led by the Group – involving flags, peace signs, and songs. Local and national media widely covered the high-profile event in Sabha. The activity was critical for encouraging youth engagement in peace initiatives by strengthening their role as peace actors.

1. Providing spaces for sustained interaction between polarized communities

LTI 2 is working to build intertribal and intercommunal forms of association on the basis of shared civic and social interests. These links will help lay the groundwork for sustainable peace and make communities more resistant to future conflict triggers.

Throughout the summer of 2015, LTI 2's partners in the South screened films featuring inspiring examples of non-violent civic activism in various places such as South Africa, India, Lebanon, and the West Bank. Eleven of the most active CSOs in the South were involved in the effort. They worked with LTI 2 to host several screenings in six Southern towns reaching almost 1,000 people – particularly youth and civil society activists – at public venues such as town halls, squares, town halls, and schools. Shortly after the festival ended, a militia took over a clinic in the residential area of al-Jadeed neighborhood despite the protests of area residents. Two days later the neighborhood elder council, youth association, and local civic activists announced a civil disobedience campaign, exactly as they had learned in the films. They shut down neighborhood stores, schools, and government centers, prompting government officials to meet and pressure the militia to evacuate the facility. Through the festival's documentary film screenings and facilitated discussions, LTI 2 aims to help diverse components of these communities emulate international best practices in non-violent movements, helping broaden their understanding of civic activism as an alternative to fighting and polarization.

LTI 2 supported a Municipal Council to establish, equip, and promote a dialogue and community center. This neutral and accessible public space is serving as a forum for regular town hall conversations between citizens and representatives of the local government, dialogue and mediation efforts to resolve local crises, and youth and CSO activities. Commissioners of government departments, such as education and transportation, are now able to use the space to convene meetings with the public to discuss issues of broad concern.

D. NATIONAL / INTERNATIONAL

In order to stay informed in a dynamic environment in Libya and support evidence-based and strategic programming, LTI 2 has developed a robust research and analysis platform. Several in-depth studies conducted by LTI 2 in 2014 and 2015 identified three salient trends across Libya: (i) social fragmentation and emergence of local and regional actors, such as municipal councils and civic organizations, as relevant political actors, (ii) increasingly constrained space for CSOs and media, and (iii) wide-spread youth disillusionment and disengagement. Based on these general trends, LTI2 has pursued three distinct programming clusters at the national level:

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- Promoting social trust and national identity
- Supporting the safety and resiliency of Libyan activists and media actors
- Supporting municipal councils through delivery of community spaces and public outreach

1. Promoting social trust and national identity

Political and social conflict over the past year eroded national confidence and core values. This, in turn, has prompted an increase in regional divisions and surge in the appeal of extremist ideologies. Combatting these trends, the West office is focusing on a series of activities that provide opportunities for trust-building between and among community members, while speaking to the broader idea of national unity. On the assumption that increased and positive engagement will reduce social fragmentation and foster greater sense of unity and social cohesion.

LTI 2 has made use of key security windows, implementing in places and times that have had seen reductions in conflict as a result of local cease-fires. A number of warring factions agreed to peace deals during the spring of 2015, which complemented a public desire to see a lasting governance settlement.

2. Supporting the safety and resiliency of Libyan activists and media actors

As noted in previous sections, the conflict in Libya constrained the space for civil society to operate effectively in Libya. Those actors and organizations that remain have been marginalized by violent conflict and are hesitant to raise their voices. LTI 2 has reinforced the resiliency and security of civil society groups and activists so that they continue to operate effectively in an environment that has become increasingly hostile to civic activism. In the past year LTI 2 identified 80 influential social activists, journalists, bloggers, and civil society leaders and provided intensive training during four international workshops focusing on citizen journalism, inclusive peace-building, journalism and human rights, advocacy, message development and dissemination, social media, and secure digital communications.

The media practitioners and leaders who participated in LTI activities have returned to Libya and shared these skills with their own networks in several Libyan cities, giving many activists the confidence to remain active. Supporting the resiliency, safety, and effectiveness of these voices is an important part of LTI 2's efforts to counter polarization and extremism in Libya.

3. Supporting municipal councils through delivery of community spaces and public outreach

In the spring of 2015, LTI conducted an in-depth study of municipal councils to explore drivers of trust in local governance. The research showed that frequency and quality of communication with the councils and the provision of services had a strong correlation with the level of constituents' confidence in municipal councils. Building on these findings, LTI has developed a

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cluster of activities to support municipal councils in Libya and help bolster their capacity and legitimacy within their communities.

As a part of a collaborative effort, LTI 2 is partnering with an INGO to support the councils to implement small-scale infrastructure projects, community spaces, and strengthen their capacity to pursue effective public outreach and improve communication with the citizens.

E. INTEGRATED RESEARCH, ANALYTICS AND REPORTING

LTI 2's integrated research, analysis and reporting program seeks to 1) improve USAID/OTI's understanding of Libyan social, political and economic conditions; and 2) support LTI 2's ability to plan, implement and assess evidenced-based programming across the country. The collapse of many of Libya's transitional processes in 2014 has ushered in a period of increased political and security uncertainty, highlighting the need to remain both flexible and analytically rigorous to program effectively. LTI 2's research, analytics and reporting program seeks to remain flexible and reactive to emerging events while also bringing rigorous and valid research methods to explore complex questions relevant to programming and strategic planning. For example, through LTI 2 research, Municipal Councils were identified as a strong partner for critical programmatic initiatives at a local level, which initially faced external resistance, but has since become a model for donor assistance in Libya. The approach to research and analysis has evolved considerably since 2014, with a focus on integrating all of LTI 2's research and reporting activities under a single platform. In the program's early LTI phase, research and analysis consisted of informal and often ad-hoc efforts segregated in the three regions. This integration allows for greater coordination across activities, synergy between research and reporting, and enables more mixed-method approaches to research problems.

LTI 2's first research and analysis activity was the Governance and Stability Assessment (GSA), a five-month research and analysis activity that supported program development by deepening awareness of the country's social and political dynamics. The GSA research process was designed as an integrated and iterative process: integrated in that it was designed to integrate several different fields of research (media monitoring, public opinion polling, qualitative research) under one umbrella so that each field is mutually reinforcing; and iterative in that successive rounds of research requests and surveys would allow the project team to refine its understanding of this complex environment over time.

The research platform supported programming in the South by increasing the project's understanding of the region's complex dynamics and identifying programming partners in the region. For example, GSA analysis helped LTI 2 understand the nuances of a media environment polarized by conflict. In response, LTI2 developed a concept for a citizen journalism activity to promote accurate, objective reporting from the southwest. Recognizing that this is also a broader national issue, LTI 2 expanded the concept to support a nationwide workshop in June, which encouraged unbiased, local alternatives to Libya's divisive media landscape. The research also

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informed activities to deter violence among youth, as surveys highlighted the problem of youth spoilers in local dialogues and suggested a mechanism for engaging youth through sports.

Building on the success of the GSA, the project developed a national research and analysis activity that began in September 2015. The Flexible Research and Analysis Platform (FRAP) preserves the GSA's integrated and iterative approach while expanding the platform nationwide, implementing closer collaboration between researchers and program staff, and building in more flexibility in terms of project scheduling and reporting types.

With a broad research agenda for the FRAP, LTI 2 will initially focus on the Libyan national dialogue and strategic communications priorities for a potential GNA. The primary objective of this research agenda is to provide a baseline of public opinion on the political dialogue and a GNA, as well as tracking of significant trends and perceptions, to inform a strategic communications strategy for the Libyan peace process and GNA. This research agenda will also provide an opportunity to empirically test messages and themes with target audiences before their incorporation into the strategic communications plan.

F. PROGRAMATIC HIGHLIGHTS

The project's strategic shift, captured by the June 2015 Rolling Assessment and the regional strategies above, was greatly influenced by the impact and assumptions established through activities in support of earlier, peace-building objectives. Specifically, LTI 2 made notable gains in two strategic areas –

- To support youth to engage more regularly and constructively in civic life
- To support voices for non-violence and dialogue to become more influential in determining Libya's transition

These strategic objectives were prioritized across the regional offices for the first nine months of program development and implementation.

1. To support youth to engage more regularly and constructively in civic life

Almost half of Libya's population is under the age of 24. Youth played a central role in the 2011 revolution and have the potential to be a catalytic demographic in Libya's transition process. However, social and economic factors have impeded their transformative potential. To harness their potential in leading the transition LTI 2 supported opportunities for youth to engage constructively in social and civic life. These opportunities have helped to develop a cadre of current and future leaders and influential figures.

"I fought with the Shura Council forces, which is considered an extremist group. But after seeing all of these great activities, especially the water sports, I realized that it's better for me to spend my time playing sports instead of being on the front line of war. I have many friends who are thinking of joining the Benghazi Shura Council forces, but I will talk with them and ask them to come to this place."

- A 16-year-old participant at the watersports event

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In Tripoli, LTI 2 partnered with a *Youth Group* to host an all-day watersports event. This group coordinated with other NGOs to bring more than 170 participants from different Libyan cities to the event – all communities that have found themselves on different sides of the conflict. Participants learned the fundamentals of sailing and kite boarding, however, the impact of the event was that these diverse youth had the opportunity to spend the day building relationships across communities that are currently in conflict, providing a forum to highlight unity among Libyans.

LTI 2 provided support for the *Finding Our Future* workshop hosted in Tunis in early May. The project partnered with the UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNSMIL and DRI to ensure that 29 youths, eight of whom were women, had an opportunity to meet and discuss their priorities with Constitution Drafting Assembly (CDA) officials. The participants prioritized their concerns, practiced presentation skills, and agreed on an advocacy plan for the subsequent phase of the process. Following this, the participants had direct conversations with five representatives from the during a roundtable meeting. The youth attendees and CDA members both appreciated the opportunity to engage in dialogue. A Youth activist from Tripoli commented, “The most important demand to me as a young woman and a mother is to ensuring that Libyan women are able to give citizenship to their children minority [Tuareg], and I’m also concerned about protecting minority rights.” She added, “It’s important for youth to give voice to their demands because there’s no guarantee of the protection of their rights from policy makers. Having our rights in the constitution will protect us.”

2. To support voices for non-violence and dialogue to become more influential in determining Libya’s transition

The prolonged conflict in Libya has empowered those who favor violence over dialogue. Citizens have been forced to prioritize security over democratic principles. LTI 2 has assisted influential supporters of dialogue and peace-building initiatives to advocate for peaceful conflict resolutions. As a part of this effort, traditional and non-traditional media outlets were also supported to develop more neutral and moderate content. Efforts in this vein were key to the project’s ongoing support of CSO resiliency as a primary programming theme.

LTI supported a comprehensive 5-day Training of Trainers (ToT) in August on the role of women in peace and transitional process, how to develop and implement trainings targeting broader audiences, and taught participants how to lead advocacy campaigns that promote dialogue and non-violent solutions. Following the training, the 19 participants returned home to Libya to lead local advocacy workshops across the country. At a workshop that brought together 28 participants, a volunteer member of an *advocacy group*, said: “This workshop has inspired everyone on the process of how to push the government for a decision, [and] call for an amendment or rejection of a law. At first, it was not clear to me how to do that. Now, I know how to use the legitimate tools out there to protect my rights as a woman.”

IV. NEXT STEPS AND PRIORITIES

As of the end of the reporting period, there is uncertainty about the future of LTI 2 programming, primarily due to funding constraints, but also because of ongoing and uncertain UNSMIL negotiations. LTI 2 has provided USAID/OTI with a series of program areas that could be activated should additional funding be identified for the program.

In the interim, three primary programming areas will continue. Multiple activities will be conducted under each programming area, which includes:

- Strategic communication support – Both in conjunction with, and potentially in advance of, a new Government of National Accord (GNA), LTI 2 will provide technical assistance to key partners in Libya to bolster the public’s access to reliable information about the ongoing political transition and peace negotiations.
- Community Support - Working primarily with Municipal Councils and local CSOs, the project will support community spaces across the country.
- Research & Analytics – The information collection and analysis platform will continue to gather and report on key issues of concern for LTI 2.

The outcome of the UNSMIL negotiations, anticipated in October 2015, will provide greater clarity about other opportunities for LTI 2’s ongoing strategic engagements in Libya.